Recovery in employment and hours continues in November

Media Release

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Source: Labour Force, Australia, November 2020

Seasonally adjusted employment increased by 90,000 people (0.7 per cent) between October and November, and hours worked by 2.5 per cent, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

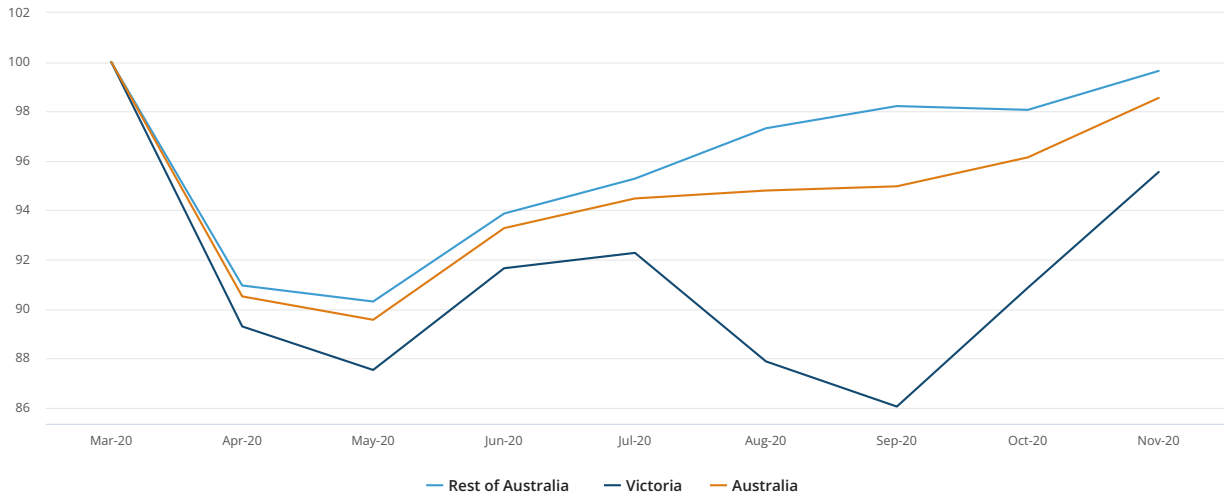
Employment and hours worked

Bjorn Jarvis, head of labour statistics at the ABS, said this latest data showed an ongoing strengthening in Victoria's labour market.

"Employment in Victoria increased by 74,000 people in November, following last month's increase of 82,000 people," Mr Jarvis said. "Hours worked in Victoria also recovered strongly again, increasing by 5.2 per cent, following an increase of 5.6 per cent in October.

"The gap between Victoria and the rest of Australia has narrowed considerably since September, off the back of two consecutive months of strong recovery in employment and hours. Employment in Victoria in November was 2.1 per cent below March, compared to 0.7 per cent in the rest of Australia, while the gap in hours worked remained more pronounced (4.5 per cent versus 0.4 per cent)."

Hours worked index



The strong recovery in full-time employment in October continued into November. The 2.1 per cent increase (183,000 people) in full-time employment over the two months was the largest increase in the series, and accounted for around two thirds of the employment increase over the period (270,000 people).

Unemployment and participation

Seasonally adjusted unemployment decreased in November (by 17,300 people), with the unemployment rate decreasing 0.2 percentage points to 6.8 per cent.

The participation rate rose by a further 0.3 percentage points, returning to the historic high of 66.1 per cent last seen in January 2020.

“Early in the COVID period we saw large flows of people out of the labour force - 666,000 people between March and May – and the participation rate fell 3.3 percentage points over the two months. While the participation rate has recovered, there are still 138,000 fewer employed people than in March and 226,000 more unemployed people,” Mr Jarvis said.

The strong employment growth in Victoria saw the state's participation rate increase by 1.2 percentage points in November, and remained only 0.2 percentage points below March. The Victorian unemployment rate decreased by 0.2 percentage points to 7.1 per cent.

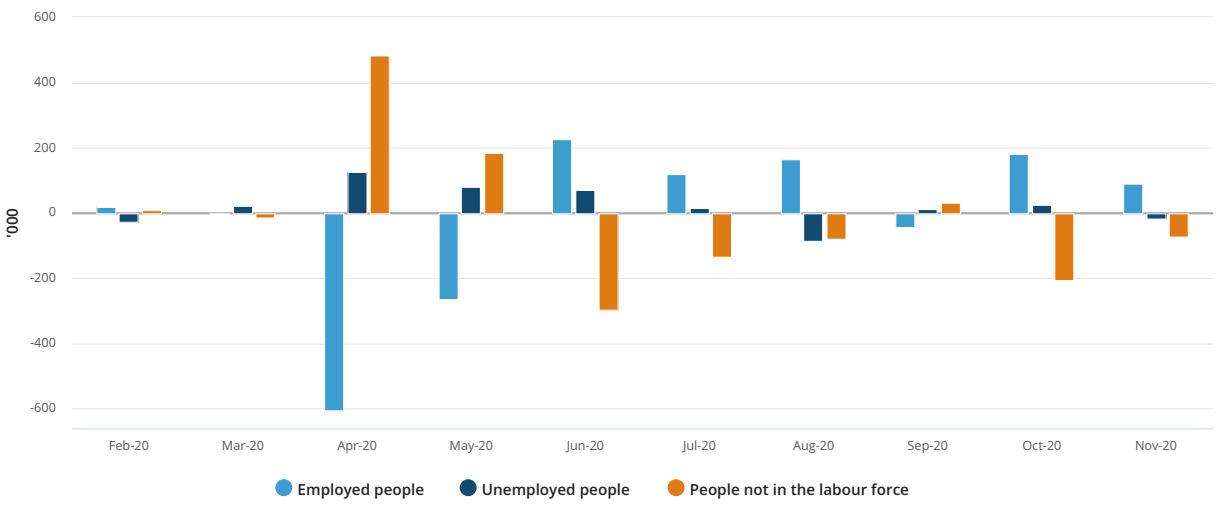
The youth participation rate increased 1.5 percentage points to 69.7 per cent, reaching its highest point since March 2009. The youth unemployment rate remained largely unchanged at 15.6 per cent, alongside strong employment growth in the age group (21,200 people).

Underutilisation

The underemployment rate fell by a further 1.0 percentage point in November to 9.4 per cent, 4.4 percentage points below its peak in April 2020.

The underutilisation rate, which combines the unemployment and underemployment rates, fell 1.2 percentage points to 16.2 per cent, 4.0 percentage points below its peak in May 2020.

Monthly changes in key labour populations, Australia



Today's release includes additional analysis of hours worked (https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/insights-hours-worked-november-2020) , including for those people working zero hours, analysis of employment and hours for the states and territories.

More details are in the November 2020 issue of Labour Force, Australia (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/nov-2020) . Further information, including regional labour market information, will be available in the upcoming November 2020 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release) , due for release on Wednesday 23 December 2020.

The ABS would like to thank Australians for their continued support in responding to our surveys during such a difficult time.

Media notes

- People in the Labour Force are either employed, or unemployed. In order to be unemployed, people must be actively looking for work, and available to start work during the reference week.
- The 'youth' age group refers to 15-24 year olds.
- The ABS has suspended publishing trend series for the COVID-19 period.
- Further information on additional labour market statistics can be found in 'Measuring the labour market impacts of COVID-19 (https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Measuring%20Labour%20Market%20COVID19) '; part of the suite of information available on the ABS website.
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